

## Community resources

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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 09TEGUCIGALPA501, CONGRESS PULLS BACK FROM THE BRINK ON REMOVING

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09TEGUCIGALPA501**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">09TEGUCIGALPA501</a>	<a href="#">2009-06-26 20:11</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Tegucigalpa</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.wikileaks.elfaro.net/es/201105/notas/4247/>  
<http://www.wikileaks.elfaro.net/es/201105/cables/4250/>

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9958  
INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS PRIORITY  
RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0173  
RUMIAAA/USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 1037  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/DIRJIATF SOUTH PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAHND/CDRJTTFB SOTO CANO HO PRIORITY  
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL//CINC/POLAD// PRIORITY

RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 000501

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CEN  
WHA/FO FOR A/S SHANNON AND DAS DAVE ROBINSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/26/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: CONGRESS PULLS BACK FROM THE BRINK ON REMOVING  
PRESIDENT ZELAYA

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Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b & d).

¶1. (C) Summary: On the evening of June 25, the National Congress came close to bringing to the floor a vote on the removal of President Zelaya from office. The Ambassador strongly advised Congress President Micheletti against such hasty action that could plunge Honduras into a deeper constitutional crisis. Other senior politicians also worked behind-the-scenes to push Congress back from the brink. In the end, congressional leaders backed away from the vote and limited themselves to launching an inquiry into legal violations that may have been committed by President Zelaya and his Administration. Supreme Court President Rivera told us that Congress does not have the power to impeach the President, since the repeal of such a law in 2005. Currently, the only means to remove a sitting President is through the filing of a criminal case filed by the Public Ministry with the Supreme Court itself. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On the evening of June 25, Congress President Robert Micheletti called the Ambassador to inform him that with the strong support of the Honduran political parties (including the two major parties ) Liberal and National), the National Congress had begun a formal debate to consider removing President Zelaya from office. Micheletti said that Congress would deliberate and review legal violations committed by the President and his Administration during his term of office. He said that the President's illegal decision to fire Armed Forces Chief Romeo Vasquez had been the immediate catalyst of the Congressional action. He said he believed that he had the votes to take this definitive action against the President. Micheletti said he wanted the United States to be informed of the Congressional deliberations and likely action. The Ambassador responded that while the USG had great respect for the Honduran Congress and would not ever attempt to tell the sovereign legislators what they should do, our view was that this action seemed totally premature, was dangerous and could precipitate a major constitutional crisis in Honduras with uncertain results. The Ambassador spoke of the high tension prevailing in the country and said the potential for social conflict and violence was high. Any hasty action by the Congress against a democratically-elected President was an extremely serious matter that could be viewed in a very critical manner by many in the international community. The Ambassador also noted that the OAS's Permanent Council was scheduled to discuss and debate the situation in Honduras tomorrow. He noted that while some people in the country were unsatisfied by the GOH's manipulation of the OAS's role in the June 28 poll, OAS involvement could be supportive of finding a legal, constitutional and peaceful way out of the crisis.

¶3. (C) Micheletti responded that President Zelaya was bent on bringing down the democratic system in Honduras. He noted that earlier that day Zelaya had threatened to shutdown the Congress and to put him in jail. He said that Zelaya had completely alienated the Honduran Congress and that the President had virtually no/no support. Micheletti appreciated the Ambassador's honest advice but felt that the moment for decision had arrived. The Ambassador again warned

that such rash action could result in incalculably negative consequences in Honduras and advised patience and calm. Later the Ambassador made calls to several key Liberal Party leaders including Presidential candidate Elvin Santos and Former President Carlos Flores and conveyed our concern about the ongoing deliberations in Congress. Both agreed that Congress' action seemed rash and irrational, but both said that Zelaya's increasing radical rhetoric and actions, his willingness to push for a poll that was clearly illegal, and his firing of the military high command had alienated the

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Congress. However, Santos and Flores said they were also trying to influence key congressional leaders, including Micheletti (who both described as stubborn), and would continue to make calls that evening. Later that evening we learned that following private consultations between the leaders of the different parties and delegations, an agreement was reached to avoid a floor vote on whether to remove the President. Instead, Congress voted to launch an investigation of the President's misdeeds with the purpose of considering some future action by the Congress.

¶4. (C) In a meeting on June 25, Honduran Supreme Court President Jorge Rivera Aviles told the Ambassador that he was extremely worried about the planned Congressional action against the President. Rivera said that congressional leaders had approached him about their plans to remove the President. Rivera said he advised against such action, which he described as illegal. Rivera said that in 2005 the Congress had repealed the impeachment law. Currently the only means to remove a President was through the filing of a criminal case by the Public Ministry (Attorney General) with the Supreme Court. In such circumstances, the Supreme Court would appoint a Supreme Court Magistrate to hear the case. A ruling by the Magistrate against the President represented the only means to legally separate him/her from the office. Rivera said the Public Ministry might opt to move against Zelaya if he goes forward with direct support for the June 28, which a judge has ruled as illegal.

¶5. (C) Comment: Zelaya's decision to fire General Vasquez has further polarized Honduras and has radicalized anti-Zelaya sentiment in Congress and many public institutions including the judiciary and the armed forces. Fortunately, the decision by congressional leaders to pull back from the brink of a constitutional crisis provides a reprieve that hopefully can help ease the tensions from their current fever pitch. In a conversation with the Ambassador on June 25, Zelaya seemed to be more aware of his increasing isolation and vulnerability. The Ambassador took the opportunity to encourage him to do use his role as President of "all Hondurans" to do everything he could to lower the tensions and send conciliatory public messages, and engage in dialogue with the opposition.

LLORENS